

SIX FLAGS NEW ENGLAND	
SUBJECT: MARKETING CRISIS PLAN	EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROCEDURES
SECTION: 27	PAGE: 1 of 19
EFFECTIVE: JANUARY 2016	SUPERSEDES: ALL PREVIOUS

Summary

At Six Flags the safety of our guest and employees is our number one priority in all areas - building, maintenance, training and operations. Nothing is more important to our company than ensuring every guest has the opportunity to safely enjoy the many attractions Six Flags New England has to offer. Delivering a safe, comfortable environment is the responsibility of every employee. Our guests entrust us with this paramount responsibility.

This commitment to safety has contributed to Six Flags' undisputed leadership as the world's largest regional theme park company. Safety is at the core of the fine brand of family entertainment that Six Flags has become noted for in our industry and in the community where we operate Six Flags New England.

It only takes one accident at Six Flags New England to destroy this hard-earned reputation. Consequently, Six Flags takes a proactive stance toward accident prevention and control.

Unfortunately, the media rarely affords us the luxury of performing a thoughtful, meticulous inquiry before presenting a news story to the public. Deadlines often dictate actions. Should an emergency strike our park, it will be essential to react quickly and decisively.

Therefore, the corporate PR department has prepared the following detailed system – wide crisis communication plan to prepare Six Flags New England to respond to an incident calmly, accurately and responsively and to preserve our hard earned reputation for safety.

Guiding Philosophy

Should an emergency occur, we are dedicated to responsibly cooperate as truthfully, courteously and efficiently as possible with those assigned to investigate an incident whether it be public safety officials or the media.

Our goal in the midst of any emergency, regardless of the severity, is to show ourselves as a responsible, competent theme and water park operator that has made good-faith efforts to protect our guests, employees, and the community. As a company, we recognize the gravity of planning for a crisis. We fully understand our good image and excellent credibility of our company and individual parks is at stake – not to mention overall revenue. We believe a well rehearsed crisis action plan can help us communicate with the media and convey accurate information in a timely manner, preventing the broadcast and printing of erroneous and harmful information from outside sources.

SIX FLAGS NEW ENGLAND	
SUBJECT: MARKETING CRISIS PLAN	EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROCEDURES
SECTION: 27	PAGE: 2 of 19
EFFECTIVE: JANUARY 2016	SUPERSEDES: ALL PREVIOUS

Chronology of Priorities

1. **PREVENTION:** the best way to handle an emergency is to prevent it from ever happening.
2. **PREPAREDNESS:** Every Six Flags' employee must know his or her duties and responsibilities in an emergency situation and use that training to meet the needs of any circumstance that presents itself.
3. **INVESTIGATION:** Find out why the emergency occurred. Speed is important because perceptions and recollections can be altered with time. However, great care should be taken when questioning witnesses. They are likely to be distressed by the emergency and their feelings are of significant concern.
4. **COMMUNICATION:** Prior to communicating with your employees or the media, it is important you have completed the first three steps. The remainder of this document is dedicated to preparing you for crisis communication.

Crisis Communications – First steps

Our guests and potential guests have a right to know what caused any emergency at Six Flags New England. We want them to get reports as quickly as possible. However, accuracy is far more important than speed and we will communicate only those facts we know to be completely true – no guesses, suppositions, opinions or perceptions will be offered to guests, the media, employees or friends. It only leads to faulty judgments that are nearly impossible to reverse when all of the facts are gathered. Remember the first impression is a lasting impression.

Activate this plan whenever fire, police or medical authorities are notified of an incident and in any other situation where the media may become interested. Document all actions as they take place, and await further instructions from management and the corporate Public Relations staff.

The first step to successful external communication is effective internal communication and the understanding of your crisis plan. The following people must be notified immediately after a major emergency occurs:

Name	Title	Home phone	Mobile Phone
John Winkler	Park President		413-478-5418
Peter Carmichael	Director of Operations		413-478-9720
Jennifer Mance	Director of Marketing		413-478-9365
Jennifer McGrath	Public Relations Manager		413-478-6334

SIX FLAGS NEW ENGLAND	
SUBJECT: MARKETING CRISIS PLAN	EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROCEDURES
SECTION: 27	PAGE: 3 of 19
EFFECTIVE: JANUARY 2016	SUPERSEDES: ALL PREVIOUS

The following are several steps, the public relations manager must accomplish during a crisis situation:

1. Make sure proper emergency authorities have been notified.
2. Notify corporate. Sandra Daniels (817) 929-5074
3. Contact the official spokesperson. In most cases this will be you; however, you may also need to call in safety/maintenance and your general manager.
4. Contact all members of your crisis team (marketing/group sales) for assistance.
5. Notify the Six Flags New England switchboard of an incident. You should also provide them with a brief script to answer any guest questions. They should refer all media inquiries to you.
6. Gather facts.
7. Draft a preliminary description of the incident, an initial media statement, and potential questions and answers.
8. React to media inquiries.

Six Flags New England Spokesperson

The designated Six Flags New England spokesperson will be the centralized source for information to the media. This will help us avoid contradictory statements, which can easily occur with multiple representatives.

The spokesperson's primary duties include collecting information, preparing statements, responding to media inquiries, ensuring that guests and other employees are kept informed, and conducting information updates as the crisis moves to the next day.

A designated spokesperson will be available at all times during the operating season. It is important to share and discuss this section with all of those on your crisis team. Make sure to include everyone who answers the phone or deals with the media. The following is a priority designation for Six Flags New England spokespersons:

OFFICIAL SPOKESPERSONS FOR (SIX FLAGS NEW ENGLAND)

1. Jennifer McGrath 413-478-6334

In the event that #1 is not available, contact the following until someone is reached. No one else is authorized to speak to the media.

SIX FLAGS NEW ENGLAND	
SUBJECT: MARKETING CRISIS PLAN	EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROCEDURES
SECTION: 27	PAGE: 4 of 19
EFFECTIVE: JANUARY 2016	SUPERSEDES: ALL PREVIOUS

In the event of a major catastrophe, corporate may also bring in an additional spokesperson.

It is the spokesperson's responsibility to be certain that the switchboard knows your whereabouts during operating hours, and be able to contact you at any time. It is recommended that all Six Flags New England spokespersons carry cellular phones, and/or pagers at all times when outside of the park.

Written response:

Two forms of communication will probably take place --verbal and written. It is important to stress that the media should always use the written statement as the basis for the report. No matter what, statements will be communicated to the media only after:

- Observation of the scene has taken place
- Information has been collected and verified
- Approval of the statements (Park President and Corporate PR)

A straightforward, factual and accurate account of the incident needs to be communicated to the media as quickly as possible. Corporate is available to help develop story positioning message points and Q and As. Once approved, this statement can be given to all media on site. You can also fax to the newsrooms and call the assignment editors or news producers to make sure they received it, if necessary.

Written Statement I: This statement must have a serious, even somber tone, and should not sound defensive. You need to communicate information, not justify or defend. Most of the information can be conveyed through factual bullets points. If this statement is ready at the time the verbal statement is delivered, it can be handed to the members of the press on hand at that time. Otherwise, the verbal statement can include the promise of a written statement.

Written Statement II: This statement will be written after the emergency is understood from all perspectives: maintenance, training, operation, and security. In the event of a major crisis, it will not be released until it is thoroughly reviewed by corporate. The sooner this statement can be released, however, the better chance it has of repairing any damage to the image of Six Flags New England. If it goes out too late, it will only serves to bring up the issue after many people have forgotten it, or tell people about it who missed the story the first time.

In the event of a major disaster where people have been seriously injured, a more elaborate and expansive effort is required. A media center will be established and a section of a parking lot at the Human Resources building will be reserved for television news trucks. In addition, a toll-free number may be opened to provide periodic updates for the public and the media.

SIX FLAGS NEW ENGLAND	
SUBJECT: MARKETING CRISIS PLAN	EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROCEDURES
SECTION: 27	PAGE: 5 of 19
EFFECTIVE: JANUARY 2016	SUPERSEDES: ALL PREVIOUS

Verbal Statement:

Our main goal is to define a crisis with a written response. However, depending on the type and severity of the incident it may become necessary to give an on-camera verbal statement and/or interview.

Remember, in this case you are the face and only protection for your Six Flags New England and our brand. Do not allow the media to intimidate you or demand something that is not in the best interest of Six Flags New England.

The statement should be concise and factual – scripted and rehearsed. Always remember:

- Deliver the statement and answer questions in a calm manner
- Give only information that has been approved by the General Manager and corporate
- Do not get pressed into answering questions
- Indicate a complete and detailed account of the incident will be reported as soon as the investigation has been finished
- Do not speculate
- If possible, try to deliver the statement in an area where the Six Flags New England isn't in the background

Media Access to the scene:

It is Six Flags' policy to give the news media controlled access to the scene of any emergency incident after a formal statement is issued unless there is an overwhelming reason to deny such access. Of course, as long as Six Flags New England has not closed the ticket sales area, a reporter can always buy a ticket and go directly to the scene. If they do this, they probably will bypass Media Relations, which means they will not sign in, nor will they have a media badge. PR should be notified if you believe a media person has entered as a paying guest so they can be escorted.

If someone arrives at the emergency scene without a badge and shows their press credentials, operations/security at the scene should explain that a statement will be made momentarily in a briefing room and that a member of our security staff will escort them back to Media Relations to sign in and then to the briefing area.

Working with the media:

Several employees may be in contact with members of the media before they ever reach the spokesperson. It is not difficult to deal with the media. The key words are courtesy and cooperation.

SIX FLAGS NEW ENGLAND	
SUBJECT: MARKETING CRISIS PLAN	EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROCEDURES
SECTION: 27	PAGE: 6 of 19
EFFECTIVE: JANUARY 2016	SUPERSEDES: ALL PREVIOUS

In a major emergency where Six Flags New England has been closed, security should be at the road blocking the Six Flags New England parking area to keep out guests and to direct members of the press to the media briefing room, which will be located at the Human Resources building. The Public Relations staff should be present outside the gate or at Human Resources to work with the media. The media will get the story any way they can, usually by talking with guests. This is not desirable since guests won't know what happened and will likely embellish the story.

You should never let the media roam the park without an escort. Direct them to the media briefing room. Security should have them sign the media list and issue them a media name/news affiliation badge (stick-on). If they question wearing the badge, security should explain that the badge will allow them access to areas that would otherwise be denied them.

Only the spokesperson should talk with the media about the incident. However, Six Flags New England staff should be as helpful to the members of the news media as they are to all of our other guests.

News organizations do not pay witnesses or victims of an emergency situation for their stories. If any employee is offered money for information, it should be reported immediately to his or her supervisor who will report it to the Six Flags New England spokesperson. First, the offer is probably untrue, and the spokesperson can do a better job with an accurate view of the veracity and reliability of individual reporters. Second, paying witnesses is considered by reputable news agencies as an unethical practice because it diminishes the credibility of witnesses and their statements.

General crisis communication guidelines:

- Microphones, tapes recorders and cameras are always on.
- You are always on the record.
- Do not talk about the incident while walking through a crowd; you don't know who is a reporter or family member of someone involved. Wait until you can talk freely in a private place.
- Provide factual information...never speculate. Verbal and written statements should be brief explanations (not justifications or defenses). Corporate PR and legal departments should review written statements.
- Don't use jargon. Use simple, straightforward language.

SIX FLAGS NEW ENGLAND	
SUBJECT: MARKETING CRISIS PLAN	EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROCEDURES
SECTION: 27	PAGE: 7 of 19
EFFECTIVE: JANUARY 2016	SUPERSEDES: ALL PREVIOUS

- Avoid lurid and dramatic descriptions.
- Do not offer possible causes of accidents or assign blame. Stress instead that current efforts are concentrated on aiding the victims.
- Provide assurances that the situation is being investigated thoroughly and the results will be communicated to the press as soon as the investigation is completed.
- Keep detailed notes of information that is disclosed.
- Review previous statements with alternate spokespersons to ensure that everyone speaks “with one voice” to avoid confusion.
- Initiate information updates regularly and contact reporters who received earlier statements.
- Call upon technical experts to provide explanations of complex systems.
- Never say no comment. Give the reason why you can’t answer, e.g., there is a legal investigation pending, etc. If you do not know the answer, simply admit it and offer to try to find out.
- Monitor press coverage and advise reporters immediately when important information is reported inaccurately.
- Do not disclose names of the injured or ill. Refer these questions to the proper authorities, i.e., police, fire department, hospital, etc. to disclose the names would violate patient confidentiality.
- Know the public relations person at the nearby hospitals as well as the public information officers with the police and fire department. Coordinate with them to ensure there are no discrepancies among the various reports. Remember, authorities file reports shortly after the incident. These reports are public documents and often serve as the source for stories. Hospital PR staffs also talk to the media on camera, they can help you if their info from the scene is accurate.
- Keep a list of all reporters who show interest in this story -- those who visit the scene, those who call, etc.
- Emphasize the company’s commitment to protecting the safety and security of its guests and discuss its safety features in detail. Emphasize the facility’s record. If the emergency

SIX FLAGS NEW ENGLAND	
SUBJECT: MARKETING CRISIS PLAN	EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROCEDURES
SECTION: 27	PAGE: 8 of 19
EFFECTIVE: JANUARY 2016	SUPERSEDES: ALL PREVIOUS

centers on a ride, have the safety record as well as the latest inspection record and state safety permit handy. However, you will only release public records and then only with management and corporate PR approval.

- Consider follow-up publicity to overcome negative impressions left by the emergency.
- Clearly state your name and title.
- Treat all reporters equally; disclose the same information to all.
- Advise reporters when updated information is expected.
- Never attempt to estimate the monetary extent of damage in the midst of an emergency. Indicate that figure will be estimated following a thorough investigation.
- Keep files of every newspaper story and secure tapes of TV coverage whenever possible. These can be used to document the emergency for legal and insurance purposes as well as later review for communication purposes.

Ten ways to control a crisis:

1. **Seize Control**
You must gain immediate control of the situation. You cannot afford to have your park spokesperson appear to be tentative and defensive. Crises such as a ride accident or food contamination could have all sorts of unfavorable repercussions. Keeping control of the situation is the only way to keep adverse information from getting reported, and to correct any misinformation that has already been reported.
2. **Spokesperson**
One designated source of information for the media allows us to coordinate information and avoid conflicting or contradictory statements. Many times the scope of the accident will determine who is appointed to be the spokesperson. In a gravely serious accident with national ramifications, it may be determined to have a senior level corporate official serve as the spokesperson. Make sure the media knows who the spokesperson is and how to access them at anytime.
3. **Accessible**
Take the media's phone calls no matter what the circumstances, and conduct briefings periodically. Be aware of the media's deadlines and know when they change shifts. Log all calls and return them.

SIX FLAGS NEW ENGLAND	
SUBJECT: MARKETING CRISIS PLAN	EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROCEDURES
SECTION: 27	PAGE: 9 of 19
EFFECTIVE: JANUARY 2016	SUPERSEDES: ALL PREVIOUS

4. **Be honest**
If you don't know the answer, say so and then commit to getting the answer as soon as possible.
5. **No "off the record" comments**
No matter how well you know a reporter or even how much you trust a reporter, never say anything off the record during a crisis. The dynamics of a crisis combined with the reporter's need to get the news and be first to report it often will dramatically change a reporter's behavior and personality. Don't get caught up in the frenzy. Control it. Don't panic. Be fair. And don't give in.
6. **Don't be intimidated**
The media will attempt to back the spokesperson into corners. The best way to handle this matter is to respond to negative or hostile questions with positive answers.
7. **Prepare statements**
Needless to say, it is critical during the initial stages of a crisis that a prepared statement containing as many verifiable details as can be reported at the time be released to the media. Give it to them in writing to considerably lessen the chances of wrong and inaccurate information being reported. Key management representatives must approve statements.
8. **Develop talking points**
After the initial statements have been prepared, a list of possible questions and appropriate answers should be developed. This will prevent the spokesperson from being ambushed by the media.
9. **Rehearse**
Read over statements prior to any interviews. Role-playing is very beneficial and can prevent any media mishaps.
10. **Create press materials**
In addition to preparing official statements, make sure press kits and background information are available. Videos and photography can assist the media in a crisis situation.

SIX FLAGS NEW ENGLAND	
SUBJECT: MARKETING CRISIS PLAN	EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROCEDURES
SECTION: 27	PAGE: 10 of 19
EFFECTIVE: JANUARY 2016	SUPERSEDES: ALL PREVIOUS

Sample verbal/written statement template:

THIS IS WHAT CAN BE CONFIRMED AT HIS TIME:

At approximately (time) _____, we learned that (brief description)_____

_____.

Right now we cannot accurately tell you the extent of the damage or possible injuries, other than to say that is has involved (*specific facility and location, if known*)

and (*number*) _____ people. Their names and conditions are not known at the present time and will be disclosed only after company officials have notified next of kin. We have requested emergency assistance from (*police, fire, etc.*) _____ and have notified company management. They have asked that media gather at (*location*)

_____ so we can brief them as soon as additional information is available and verified.

IF YOU ARE ASKED ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS, MAKE THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT:

That is all I can confirm at this time. I am sure you understand we are all very busy dealing with this situation. We will need your patience for a few hours. As soon as we have more information that has been verified, we will let you know. Thank you for your patience.

SIX FLAGS NEW ENGLAND	
SUBJECT: MARKETING CRISIS PLAN	EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROCEDURES
SECTION: 27	PAGE: 11 of 19
EFFECTIVE: JANUARY 2016	SUPERSEDES: ALL PREVIOUS

Media Inquiry Log

Date/Time:

Name:

Organization:

Phone:

Question:

Deadline:

Response:

Date/Time:

Name:

Organization:

Phone:

Question:

Deadline:

Response:

Date/Time:

Name:

Organization:

Phone:

Question:

Deadline:

Response:

SIX FLAGS NEW ENGLAND	
SUBJECT: MARKETING CRISIS PLAN	EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROCEDURES
SECTION: 27	PAGE: 12 of 19
EFFECTIVE: JANUARY 2016	SUPERSEDES: ALL PREVIOUS

NOTES:

SIX FLAGS NEW ENGLAND	
SUBJECT: MARKETING CRISIS PLAN	EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROCEDURES
SECTION: 27	PAGE: 13 of 19
EFFECTIVE: JANUARY 2016	SUPERSEDES: ALL PREVIOUS

NOTES:

SIX FLAGS NEW ENGLAND	
SUBJECT: MARKETING CRISIS PLAN	EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROCEDURES
SECTION: 27	PAGE: 14 of 19
EFFECTIVE: JANUARY 2016	SUPERSEDES: ALL PREVIOUS

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NOTES:

SIX FLAGS NEW ENGLAND	
SUBJECT: MARKETING CRISIS PLAN	EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROCEDURES
SECTION: 27	PAGE: 15 of 19
EFFECTIVE: JANUARY 2016	SUPERSEDES: ALL PREVIOUS

SAFETY FACTS - BACKGROUND

Six Flags spends hundreds of thousands of dollars annually on safety-related issues, such as employee training and upgrading and adding on to its emergency systems.

FIRST AID

Adequately staffed, based on attendance, with first aid personnel. First Aid is in operation one hour before park opening and until park is clear of all guests.

FIRE SAFETY

The fire sprinkler systems protect most buildings or ride structures. All are tied into a central alarm system board, which is monitored 24 hours a day. Smoke detectors are installed in buildings and equipment areas without sprinkler systems.

Most major buildings (i.e. theaters, restaurants, large shops and maintenance/warehouse areas) have sprinkler systems.

Ansul hood chemical extinguishing systems protect various cooking appliances in food units.

Over 10 fire hydrants on fire main.

Over 400 fire extinguishers are in place at rides and in buildings.

Buildings are inspected annually by the Agawam Fire Department.

Insurance company inspectors inspect all fire protection equipment, including fire pumps.

The park has internal programs for periodic safety inspections of all Park buildings and attractions, fire systems, valves and extinguishers.

STAFFING

Six Flags has multiple full-time employees who devote many hours per week to safety and fire prevention activities on a year-round basis.

During the season, the Safety staff is further supplemented with the addition of Seasonal Safety Supervisors. Each of these individuals contributes many hours per week to the safety effort. This staffing ensures that a Safety Representative is on duty every hour that the Park is open.

SAFETY TRAINING

Each year, a group of full-time employees receives training in CPR and First Aid.

SIX FLAGS NEW ENGLAND	
SUBJECT: MARKETING CRISIS PLAN	EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROCEDURES
SECTION: 27	PAGE: 16 of 19
EFFECTIVE: JANUARY 2016	SUPERSEDES: ALL PREVIOUS

Safety items are incorporated into the job guides used to train employees.

Safety and First Aid personnel conduct special safety sessions for Security employees and for Seasonal Supervisors. Items covered are safety and first aid policies and procedures, immediate care for choking, bleeding or unconscious persons, fire prevention and extinguisher use.

Each department has an individual who is the Safety Contact.

RIDE CERTIFICATION PROCESS

All Ride Hosts and Hostesses must be certified. Every ride operator is certified each season.

Certification includes:

On-the-job training, general rides training, attendant training per ride and restricted area training.

Up to three written tests (general Park; attendant; and control console/operator). Passing grades on all tests, but the employee must be coached through each missed question in order to obtain 100% proficiency before being certified.

Minimum age requirement of 16 years of age.

Once certified, Hosts and Hostesses wear picture IDs listing the rides on which they have been certified.

Employees may never operate a ride unless certified.

RIDE INSPECTIONS

Hundreds of man-hours of inspections occur each day before the park opens to the public. On any typical operating day, there are ride mechanics, electricians, rides control, carpenters, electronics technicians and sound technicians on duty for both scheduled and unscheduled inspections. Plus, carpenters walk the tracks of the wooden coasters each operating day. Inspections take place from 6 to 10 a.m. prior to park opening and also during ride operation on each operating day.

Appearance and surface defect inspections are also performed by ride operating personnel on a continuous basis before and during ride operation.

OTHER PARK SAFETY PROGRAMS

SIX FLAGS NEW ENGLAND	
SUBJECT: MARKETING CRISIS PLAN	EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROCEDURES
SECTION: 27	PAGE: 17 of 19
EFFECTIVE: JANUARY 2016	SUPERSEDES: ALL PREVIOUS

The majority of the "winter rehab" performed on rides is done as preventive maintenance.

Management and hourly personnel are charged with the identifying, reporting, and correcting unsafe acts and conditions. Our programs require that management devote time to accident investigation and to counseling employees who exhibit problems relating to safety performance.

Selected members of management devote time throughout the year to attend Safety Committee meetings at which every department is represented.

Seasonal employees are involved in the safety effort through such devices as membership on safety committees and safety promotion programs.

In addition to scheduled inspection, maintenance personnel spend many hours eliminating unsafe conditions and making changes to buildings, grounds, equipment, etc. to enhance safety.

THE SAFETY OF OUR GUESTS AND EMPLOYEES IS THE NUMBER ONE PRIORITY AT SIX FLAGS NEW ENGLAND.

SIX FLAGS NEW ENGLAND	
SUBJECT: MARKETING CRISIS PLAN	EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROCEDURES
SECTION: 27	PAGE: 18 of 19
EFFECTIVE: JANUARY 2016	SUPERSEDES: ALL PREVIOUS

CHECKLIST

Before the crisis :

- Always have a current version of the crisis plan
- Always have current information and statistics

Priorities during the crisis:

- Report to Command Post and check in with the Incident Command Officer;
- Don position identification vest;
- PR Manager informs Sandra Daniels (corporate VP Communications at 972.595.5178 or 817.929.5074) immediately;
- PR Manager informs the receptionist and all other persons who might be required to field questions including security agents (in this case making sure all colleagues are in the loop and help out with this), informing them to take messages and relate that all calls will be returned as quickly as possible and to refrain from offering any comments;
- PR Manager collates the information to be communicated and meets with the authorities' spokesperson (policeman, fireman, etc.);
- PR Manager drafts the initial statement;
- PR Manager prepares a list of Q&As;
- PR Manager contacts corporate PR to validate different points (content of communication and Q&As to be provided). The same exercise is carried out with park management;
- PR Manager makes all necessary corrections to his communication statement, if necessary;
- PR Manager identifies an area where he and others can meet the media. This could be in another room if the situation happens indoors.
- Spokesperson meets the press; if information is not available, offer to hold another meeting at a pre-determined time;

SIX FLAGS NEW ENGLAND	
SUBJECT: MARKETING CRISIS PLAN	EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROCEDURES
SECTION: 27	PAGE: 19 of 19
EFFECTIVE: JANUARY 2016	SUPERSEDES: ALL PREVIOUS

- Spokesperson returns all calls;
- PR Manager works on the content of a more substantial statement if needed, which will follow the same approval process as the initial one;
- Spokesperson defers to the medical authorities for follow-ups;

All colleagues work together to ensure that the following tasks are undertaken:

- Immediately inform the park's spokesperson and the management committee as well as the Security Supervisor. Should the spokesperson be temporarily unavailable or unreachable, it may be necessary to communicate with the park's public relations firm;
- Establish a security perimeter limiting media access to the scene of the accident and keep them at a safe distance, out of camera range;
- Tighten security at strategic places (ex: entrances);
- Establish an area where the media can be temporarily set-up which should be outside of the crisis perimeter and sufficiently large to accommodate media vans. Should PR require it, move everyone inside a pre-determined area where the media could work while waiting for further developments;
- Each park makes sure that the majority of people involved are taken care of and are treated out of the way.
- Should victims be hospitalized, each park will delegate someone to work in collaboration with the spokesperson.

After the crisis, the PR Manager must:

- Monitor all media coverage;
- Correct any error;
- Prepare a post-mortem;
- Evaluate the pertinence of making an announcement or an event which could re-establish the facts, the reputation, etc.